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United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

(PURSUANT TO S. RES. 400, 94TH CONGRESS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

March 30, 1977

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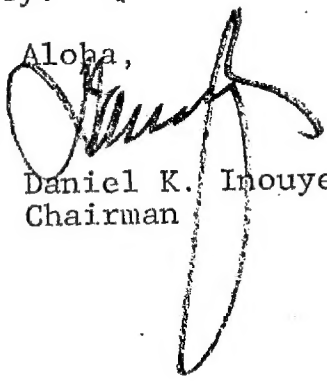
Admiral Stansfield Turner
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Langley, Virginia

Dear Admiral:

On March 10, 1977, columnist William Safire wrote in The New York Times (article attached), among other things, that the Intelligence Community was providing to the NSC information which could be used to blackmail Members of Congress. Congressman James P. Johnson of Colorado has asked that these allegations be investigated (letter attached).

The Senate Select Committee would be grateful if you would provide us an analysis of the allegations in Mr. Safire's article and answers to Congressman Johnson's questions in the attached letter at your earliest opportunity.

Aloha,


Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman

The Back Channel

ESSAY

By William Safire

SAN FRANCISCO—Let us now consider the strange origin of the investigation into corruption in the House of Representatives, which—if properly pursued—will lead to the slamming of cell doors behind one out of every ten Congressmen.

In the White House, there was and is more than one channel of intelligence information to the President. The obvious channel is through the Director of Central Intelligence. The other—the back channel—is usually through a member of the National Security Council staff designated by the President to handle the "bureaucratic byproduct" of the collection of foreign intelligence.

This byproduct is usually generated by ELINT, the electronic intelligence operations of the National Security Agency, that part of the Department of Defense that tunes in on all overseas communications, and—we hope—can even detect a computer's order to launch a missile.

The political byproduct is of interest to a President. For example, it enables him to know how foreign governments are evaluating a visit of his Vice President. ELINT tells him what foreign finance ministers are telling their home offices about the negotiating position of our Secretary of the Treasury, enabling the President to give good advice to his representative.

Closer to home, suppose a top White House staffer and a member of the Cabinet attend a dinner, seated at different tables, at an embassy in Washington. After the dinner, the foreign ambassador and his staff often compare notes about the different answers to the same question, giving them a good fix on the political tension within an American administration.

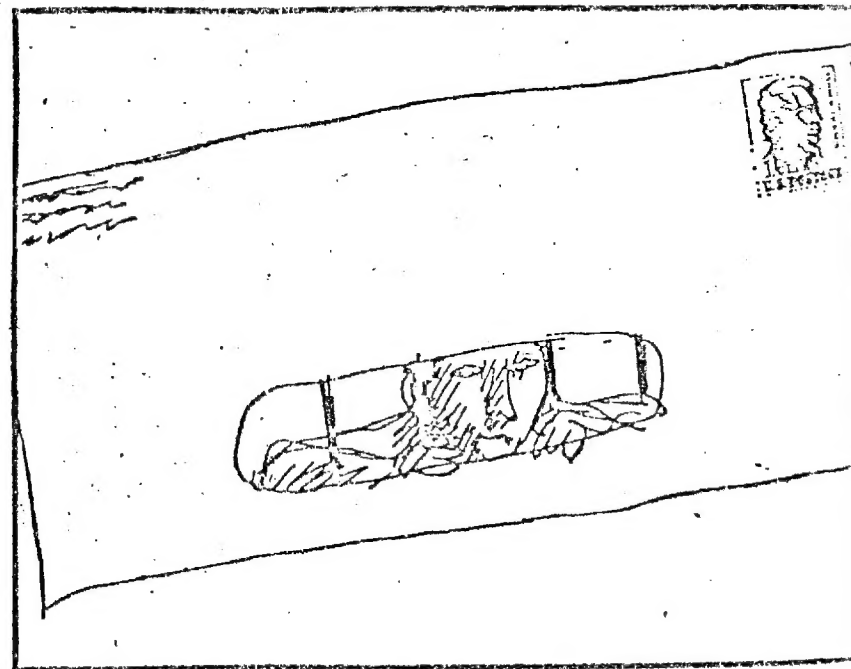
The President is interested in that political assessment, but does not think it is necessary—or thinks it would be an abuse of power—for the Director of Central Intelligence or Secretary of Defense to have it. A close staff aide, beholden to nobody but the President and his National Security adviser, looks over the political byproduct and decides what goes into the Oval Office.

The man who has had more experience than even Laurence Eagleburger in doing that job is William G. Hyland, a highly regarded old pro who was on the N.S.C. staff in the Nixon years, headed State Department intelligence and was Deputy National Security Adviser in the Ford years, and now runs the European "cluster" in Mr. Carter's N.S.C.

In 1974 and early 1975, the byproduct became loaded with information about the "back channel" of the South Korean C.I.A., and was reviewed by the National Security Adviser, then Mr. Kissinger. Control of that kind of information was the reason he fought so hard to retain his N.S.C. "second hat" while Secretary of State. He decided not to transmit most of that information at that time to President Ford.

By mid-1975, however, reporter Seymour Hersh of The New York Times had broken the story of the extensive listening in on overseas calls, and Otis Pike's House Committee on Intelligence took public testimony from the head of the ELINT operation on Aug. 8, 1975. The Pike com-

mittee issued subpoenas for embarrassing information; contempt and perjury were talked about, and Secretary Kissinger (along with Ambassador Richard Helms in Iran) became worried.



GARY SELL

In the last week of October 1975 some Congressmen were warned about Administration knowledge of illegal payments handled through the Speaker of the House's office, involving members of the "Board of Education" who ran the House. The implication of the warning was clear: If the Pike committee pushed its investigation or of that investigation had plenty of ammunition with which to riddle the House.

exactly the opposite of what justice in this complicated case requires. On Jan. 24, 1977, House Ethics Committee chairman John Flynt wrote Senator Howard Baker asking for more information about the Congressional bribe-taking he spoke about on television. The Senator replied the next day that the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence had begun a staff inquiry into the K.C.I.A.-U.S.C.I.A. connection, and would pass along "information collaterally developed."

Those then operating the back channel did their duty and ELINT byproduct was shown to the President after his Vail vacation. Mr. Ford expressed amazement at the extent of greed and corruption rampant among his old House colleagues and in early 1976 directed that the information be turned over to the Justice Department.

In a few months, a grand jury was impaneled and has been trying to puzzle out the paper trail ever since. In 1977, however, the Democrats took over the Justice Department. Charged last week with trying to deadline the grand jury to death, Attorney General Griffin Bell promised more speed—

If Senate Intelligence or House Ethics wants the facts, let them talk to Billy Hyland, or better still, the N.S.A.'s Juanita Moody. "If tough," Mrs. Moody starts to spill, "one very good source told me, 'For Congress'

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